

Present: Laila Barr; Dan Chavre; Kathy Dunn, vice-chair; Dave Elliott, chair; Chris Fankhauser; Carol Finn (provisional); Kumiko Huff; Carl Johnson; Jane Kuechle; Ed Miller; Mike O'Neal (provisional); Tina Shereen; Roger Thorderson

Excused: Miranda Leidich, Carla Saulter

Staff: Barbara de Michele, Community Relations liaison; Darwin Campbell, manager of Sales and Customer Service; Phil Branham, Customer Services Fare Media Sales Supervisor; Betty Gullede-Bennett, KCDOT Communications Manager

Guests: Claire Shary, Sandy Paul-Lyle, Anirudh Sahni, John Jensen, former Transit Advisory Committee members

Elliott called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m, following a reception honoring Barbara de Michele's retirement from King County.

Regional Reduced Fare Program/ORCA Conversion

Campbell began the discussion by acknowledging that many concerns about Metro's conversion to the ORCA card, particularly with regard to the regional reduce fare, had surfaced since the beginning of the year. "In some ways, we are the victim of our own success," he stated. "We encouraged people to come and convert, and they came – in much larger numbers than we had anticipated." Large numbers and extended processing times led to long lines and backups at the processing centers, which strained conditions "even for the able-bodied." For people with disabilities, the situation became intolerable.

Campbell and Branham outlined some of the steps that have been taken in the last couple of weeks to rectify the situation:

- The division hired additional staff;
- Customer service representatives (greeters) were added at the King Street Center and Westlake pass sales offices to direct and differentiate traffic;
- Waiting chairs added to all areas;
- Extended the free card program for the ORCA card through February;
- Added sales windows at the King Street Center and Westlake pass sales offices;
- Added assistants at Ticket Vending Machines in the vicinity of the King Street Center and Westlake pass sales offices;
- Created and distributed flyers and posters;
- Revised the website to be more customer-friendly;
- Distributed information through ACCESS drivers, senior citizen centers, and social service agencies;
- Created and distributed a regional reduced fare poster that helps individuals decide whether or not they need to convert to ORCA.
- Customer surveys conducted to ask people how to improve services even more.

Note: Provisional membership is provided to Transit Advisory Committee nominees whose applications have been approved by Metro staff, approved by their respective Councilmembers, and submitted to the Executive. Provisional members are allowed to deliberate with other TAC members, but may not participate in votes or be elected to committee leadership posts.

Transit Advisory Committee members provided the following input:

- Barr – Is there any chance that you can establish satellite stations in places outside of downtown Seattle? *[Yes, we have regular outreaches at senior centers in Bellevue, Kirkland, Renton, Highline, and at the Veterans Administration Hospital. Unfortunately, we do not have the computer capability to process ORCA cards onsite. We must gather the applications, take pictures, finish the process at the main office and then mail the cards back to the customers].*
- Thorderson – What about south King County? Auburn, Enumclaw, Kent? *[Yes, we have outreach programs there, usually on a single day due to lower volumes of requests.]*
- Johnson – As a compliment, I recently stopped in to get my pass. Did it go faster? No. But it was smoother. There weren't the frustrations we encountered in January. I have an on-going frustration with the voucher system that my employer (federal government) offers.
- Huff – It would be very helpful to know where I can get more of the posters, so I can post them at the Shoreline Senior Center.
- Shereen: Some of this is a temporary problem. In the future, people will be renewing on line.
- Dunn – I heard that these ORCA cards are supposed to last from three to five years. What happens when they wear out? *[Branham: There's no plan in place now. We are focused on rollout now and will begin focusing on strategies after rollout.]*
- Chavre – ORCA has come a lot farther than I thought it would by this time. What you've done in a short period of time is remarkable. Today it's not as big a problem as it was when we held the retreat. Progress has been made.
- Johnson – Having the people there on the floor has been very helpful.
- Dunn – I'd like to go back to the budget. *[Campbell: What happened in January was not acceptable. We had to make the changes no matter what the cost. The damage to our customer service levels and reputation were unacceptable.]*
- Shary: I was one of those people who stood in a long line. The vending machine only gave me one pass when I paid for two. When I finally got to the front of the line to try to get the error corrected, I was told I was in the wrong place. Also, your ORCA website is not logical. It's very hard to find where you can apply for a correction. I still don't have the pass. *[Campbell said he would help her recover her pass].*
- Dunn: Have you thought about having people take a number, like they do at DMV? *[Branham: We looked at that as a "last resort", the other strategies we put in place were working. At the time, utilizing that strategy involved moving customers between floors. What you see at DMV are those overhead electronic signs that let you know when to come forward. They may have three different lanes going at once. It would take us awhile to get the equipment and install it. We needed solutions right away.]*
- Chavre: I see that there are still some Puget Passes out there. And can they still get transfers? *[We always planned to roll this out over a year's time, so some*



people will have Puget Passes up until next December. As for transfers, you can always transfer within the Metro system if you have a pass. Within a two hour window, the ORCA pass will recognize that you've already paid. What's going away are paper inter-agency transfers. Metro will continue to have paper transfers within its system].

- Miller: I bought a second ORCA card for my wife, and I put money in the e-purse. No one told us that if you don't use the card for 30 days, the card is deactivated and the money goes away. That's absolutely ridiculous. And to get the money back, you have to make a phone call. You can't do it online. *[Branham: It's a glitch in the system. If you buy the card at a sales window or Ticket Vending Machine, there's no problem. It's only if you buy the card remotely (online, mail or phone) that we're finding this issue. Yes, we're working on extending the time-frame to 60 days.]*
- Dunn: If we want to make changes to the ORCA card, who do we lobby? *[Branham: It's a regional governance body, so that's very hard to answer].*
- Chavre: How about more readers at the stations. There's only one scanner at the Kent depot.
- Miller: I agree. There are actually three readers, but they're all located right in the middle. You have a hundred people getting off the train at one time, trying to get their card scanned, and they all bunch up together. Add more readers and space them out and the problem goes away.
- Shereen: If you ever decide to make changes to the Regional Reduced Fare application, I would love to give you my input.

Letter to Local Jurisdictions

Members reviewed a draft letter, prepared by Tina Shereen, to be sent to local jurisdictions in King County, advocating for advertising in bus shelters. At the request of Sharron Shinbo, Marketing Project Manager, the group did not take action on the letter and will wait for her input at the March meeting. Members did discuss presenting the letter at local jurisdictions as follows:

- Roger Thordarson, Ed Miller, Dan Chavre – Kent, Auburn, Enumclaw
- Carl Johnson – Federal Way and Des Moines
- Kumiko Huff and Laila Barr – Shoreline
- Dave Elliott and Carol Finn – Bellevue, Kirkland
- Jane Kuechle – Issaquah, Redmond
- Chris Fankhauser, Carla Saulter, Miranda Leidich, Mike O'Neal and Kathy Dunn – Seattle
- Tina Shereen – Seattle or Renton

Annual Work Plan

Members reviewed the 2010 annual work plan as presented by de Michele and based on the top priorities from the annual retreat. Members suggested some changes to format, and requested that the work plan be re-visited at the end of each meeting. Thordarson moved/Elliott seconded that the 2010 work plan be adopted as amended. Passed unanimously.

Committee Business

Ed Miller, Jane Kuechle, Kathy Dunn, Laila Barr and Kumiko Huff asked to be notified of the Regional Transit Committee meeting scheduled for February 17.

Elliott adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.